

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner:

- (a) rejected claims 55-57 and 61 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph;
- (b) rejected claims 55-58 and 61 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on U.S. Patent No. 5,810,721 to Mueller et al. ("Mueller"); and
- (c) allowed claims 1, 6-8, and 14-16.

By this Amendment, Applicant proposes to cancel claim 34 and all of the rejected claims, claims 55-58 and 61. The proposed cancellation of claims 34, 55-58, and 61 is without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to pursue these claims in a related application. Applicant submits that, with the cancellation of claims 55-58 and 61, all claim rejections are rendered moot.

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 6-9, 14-25, 27-33, 35, and 36 will be pending in this application. While the Examiner has not indicated that previously withdrawn claims 9, 17-25, 27-33, 35 and 36 are allowable, Applicant requests that these claims be rejoined with the allowed elected claims in this application. Claims 9, 17-25, 27-33, 35, and 36 all depend either directly or indirectly from allowed independent claim 1, and thus, are allowable for at least the same reasons that independent claim 1 is allowable.

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1, 6-9, 14-25, 27-33, 35, and 36 in condition for allowance. Applicant submits that the proposed amendments that merely cancel rejected claims do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships

claimed were earlier claimed. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

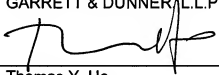
In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant submits that the claims are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicant therefore requests the entry of this Amendment, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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